



Government Office Building  
9830 Patuxent Woods Dr.  
Columbia, MD 21046

**MINUTES**  
**Thursday, 06 May 2021**

Meeting Opened: 1900 hours  
Meeting Closed: 2012 hours  
Meeting Location: Virtual (WebEx); due to COVID-19 pandemic

**MEETING SUMMARY:**

J. Greg Jolissaint, Chair, presiding, opened the meeting at 1900 hrs.

**1. Roll Call of Commission Members to Establish a Quorum**

- a. Roll Call: The roll was taken; eleven commission members present, one excused, and one vacant. The Chair declared the Commission was in a quorum and brought the meeting to order.

Commissioner	Present	Excused	Absent
J. Greg Jolissaint (Chair)	✓		
Jonathan Branch (Co-Chair)		✓	
Reginald Avery	✓		
Cherron Blakely	✓		
Michael Blum	✓		
Steven M. Bolen	✓		
Nafrettifi Griffin	✓		
Michael Griggs	✓		
Kelly Kesler	✓		
Robert Lowell	✓		
Keith McGuire	✓		
Paul Rivers	✓		
(Vacant)			

- b. Acknowledgement of Howard County Government Officials in Attendance: Lisa Terry (Manager, Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families) and Jennifer Jones (Deputy Chief of Staff, Howard County Executive).



- c. Special Guest(s): Mallery Lass (Outreach Manager for the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic at Easterseals) and Jasmine Brewer (Executive Director, MakingChange Financial Wellbeing Center of Howard County).
- d. Commission Applicants: Jerry Wykoff.
- e. Others in Attendance: Bob Pelletier (A.L. Post 156/VFW Post 7472), John Spain (A.L. Post 156), Yale Stenzler, M. Ward, Meghan Young (Manager of External Affairs, Office of Community Engagement, Baltimore County Government), and Vikki Garcia (Community Outreach for U.S. Representative John Sarbanes)

**2. Meeting Opened by the Chair/Pledge of Allegiance**

- The Chair led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Reminders of Virtual Meeting Etiquette**

- The Chair stated the meeting rules of etiquette.

**4. Consideration of the April 2021 Meeting Minutes**

- The April minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

**5. Guest Speaker(s)**

Mallery Lass:

- Mallery is a U.S. Air Force veteran.
- Easterseals partnered with the Steven A. Cohen Veterans Network Clinic in 2017.
- The Clinic provides high-quality and accessible behavioral health care to veterans, active duty service members, their families, and caregivers.
- Services are available to any person who has served at least one day in the U.S. Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, regardless of role or discharge status.
- They have 19 clinics nationwide including in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.
- They offer counseling and wellness programs for individuals, adolescents, and families.
- Services include telehealth within the state of Maryland as well as in D.C. and Virginia.
- On 22 May, they will participate with other local organizations to promote mental health awareness and will offer a virtual “Yoga with Puppies” from 1000 - 1100 hours.
- Contact the Clinic Services at 240.847.7500, or contact Mallery at [mlass@eseal.org](mailto:mlass@eseal.org). For more information about the Clinic and special events, go to: <https://www.easterseals.com/DCMDVA/our-programs/events-cohen-clinic.html>. Sign up for their newsletter at <http://bit.ly/CohenClinicNewsletter>.

Jasmine Brewer

- MakingChange is a HUD approved housing counseling organization.
- They are located in Columbia and Laurel.



- They provide one-on-one and group education for home-buying and rental, and offer fair housing training.
- They provide free tax preparation assistance during tax season and other financial counselling.
- They have served over 260 families receiving over \$400,000 in federal income tax refunds.
- Contact Jasmine at 443.518.7646, or visit them at 9770 Patuxent Woods Dr., Columbia, MD 21046. For more information, visit their website at: <https://makingchangecenter.org>.

## **6. Old Business**

- a. Update on Survey Proposed by the Commission's Subcommittee on Equity and Racial Justice:
  - The Chair stated that eight veterans have responded to the survey. He encourages everyone to get the word out about the survey.
- b. Update on Veterans Support Group:
  - The Support Group meets the first Monday of the month from 1800 - 1930 hours.
  - For more information, and to register, go to: <https://namihowardcounty.org/support-and-education/veteran-support-group>.
  - The Group is still deciding when it will start meeting in-person again.
- c. United Through Reading (UTR) Program.
  - See attached flyer.
- d. Feedback on the VAMHCS April Meeting:
  - The last meeting was held on 21 April via a virtual connection. Mr. Jonathan Eckman presided.
  - Secretary McDonough visited the Baltimore VA Medical Center on 20 April and participated in the interment service for PFC Deloris Ruddock on 27 March. PFC Ruddock was a member of the 6888<sup>th</sup> Central Postal Directory Battalion.
  - A private wreath laying ceremony will take place at the Baltimore National Cemetery on Memorial Day. Flag placement is TBD this year.
  - The Chair reminded everyone that you do not need to be enrolled at the VA to get a COVID-19 vaccination.
- e. Update on the HCPSS Simulated Congressional Hearings (SCH) on 26 May:
  - Commissioner Avery said that the SCH coordinator sent an email to all the Commissioners participating in the SCH with information and asking for a photo.
  - The SCH will be held virtually at the Hanover Hills Elementary School.
  - HCPSS will likely hold a Veterans Day event in November; the Commission will be asked to participate. Standby for more information.
- f. Update on Month of the Military Child:
  - Lisa stated that in April, a number of resources were posted on social media available to veterans.



- The video will be coming soon. The County Executive and Commissioner Griffin and her children were interviewed.

g. Update on Howard County Web-Based Veterans Tribute:

- The veterans resource directory has been updated to include about 100 government agencies, non-profits, and other organizations that support veterans and their families. The update should be rolled out with the Memorial Day tribute page.

h. Veterans Home Exploratory Committee:

- No update.

i. Commission Letter of Appreciation and Thanks for Milton Matthews, Columbia Association President:

- See attached Letter of Appreciation.

**7. Business “On Hold” Due to the Pandemic**

- Columbia Lake Monument Completion. (Donations can still be made via mail.)
- The Howard County Veterans Foundation will be meeting again in May.

**8. New Business**

a. Update on the Veterans Day Parade:

- The next meeting will be held in the second week of June.
- John Spain stated the Parade Committee has contacted local school bands and GRTC Transit System. John thanked Yale Stenzler for his help.

b. Memorial Day Activities:

- Activities will take place per the following

30 May:               Wreath Laying Ceremony  
                          St. John’s Episcopal Church  
                          9120 Frederick Rd., Ellicott City, MD  
                          1130 hours

31 May:               Memorial Day Ceremony  
                          Ellicott City Courthouse  
                          3725 Park Ave, Ellicott City, MD  
                          1230 hours

- Additional Activities - A.L. Post 156 will distribute poppies per the following:

29 May:               Mission BBQ, 6720 Columbia Crossing, Columbia, MD  
29-31 May:           Clarke’s Ace Hardware, 10325 US Route 40, Ellicott City, MD  
29-31 May:           Lowes, 8281 Gateway Overlook Dr., Elkridge, MD



c. Update on the Rotary Club:

- Lisa stated that the Rotary Club will be submitting a \$2,000 grant for bands and JROTC cadets.

d. Reminder of Flag Retirement Ceremony in July:

- Flag retirement ceremonies are held quarterly; the next retirement will be held in July.

e. New Business from Commission Members:

- Lisa stated that Ellicott City Partnership is launching their local *Hometown Hero* banner program, honoring the past and current members of the armed forces and first responders who are residents of Howard County. Banners will cost \$250 each. For more information go to: <https://form.jotform.com/210284611668052>.

**9. Other Announcements or Dates of Importance**

- 07 May: Military Spouses Day
- 09 May: Mother's Day
- 13 May: UMGC Virtual Appreciation Fair  
(<https://globalmedia.umgc.edu/2021/04/22/umgc-to-host-military-veterans-virtual-appreciation-fair-may-13/?sf245256056=1>)
- 15 May: UMGC Graduation Ceremony; Keynote Speaker, Brig. Gen. Birkhead
- 15 May: Armed Forces Day
- 31 May: Memorial Day

**10. Next Commission Meeting Date(s)**

- The next Commission meeting will be held on 03 June starting at 1900 hours.
- There will be no Commission meeting in July.
- TBD meeting in August.

**11. ADJOURNMENT:**

- The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2012 hours.

The Commission stands in adjournment until  
**03 June 2021.**

Minutes were taken by Steven M. Bolen.

J. Greg Jolissaint  
Presiding  
Chair, HCCVMF



**Attachment A**  
**United Through Reading (UTR) Program Flyer**



# SHARE STORYTIME... NO MATTER THE DISTANCE



United Through Reading brings military and Veteran families together through video-recorded storytime with our FREE program. Your child receives the recording and book to read along with you on demand.

Reading aloud to children is the most important thing you can do for their academic success. Reading together also facilitates important moments of family bonding that transcend our technologically-driven world.

With the United Through Reading App, Veterans always have access to virtual storytime with their children, grandchildren, or other loved ones. The free and secure app now is preloaded with ebooks! Record anytime, anywhere and send to the child to watch whenever you can't be together in person.

Download the FREE and SECURE App on the Google Play and Apple App Stores today!

## UNITED THROUGH READING'S VETERAN OUTREACH IS SUPPORTED BY



**BOB WOODRUFF FOUNDATION**  
Investing in the Next Chapter for Our Veterans

## HOW IT WORKS

1. **Log into United Through Reading App** using ID.me to verify military affiliation.
2. **Select a free book** from our hand-picked collection, including ebooks on the app, and record a story. Free books can be requested at [UTR.org/getbooks](https://utr.org/getbooks).
3. **Upload video.** An email is sent to the recipient to watch on the web viewer or download to their device.
4. **Send a physical copy of the book** to the child through the app or at [UTR.org/getbooks](https://utr.org/getbooks).
5. **The child can watch and read along** with video storytime on demand.

Visit [UTR.org/app](https://utr.org/app) for more information.  
For help, email [appsupport@utr.org](mailto:appsupport@utr.org).



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858.481.READ(7323) | [unitedthroughreading.org](https://unitedthroughreading.org)  
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**Attachment B**

**Commission Letter of Appreciation for Milton Matthews, Columbia Association President**





April 18, 2021

Mr. Milton Matthews  
President & CEO  
The Columbia Association  
6310 Hillside Court #100  
Columbia, Maryland 21046

Dear Mr. Matthews (Milton),

On behalf of the Howard County Commission on Veterans and Military Families, please accept our sincere gratitude and appreciation for your unwavering support of the Howard County Commission and our county military service members, Veterans, and their families. You have consistently demonstrated, through word and deed, your sincere respect and affirmation for military service and those who served.

We will never be able to sufficiently thank you for allowing the Commission and our county Veteran Service Organizations to combine the Veterans Day Parade with the Veterans Day Lakefront Ceremony. Under your leadership, this parade and ceremony have grown in participation, attendance, and importance – and they are both appreciated by the Howard County residents who participate and attend these first class events.

Similarly, your total support for the construction of the Vivian C. “Millie” Bailey Park, and the future Veterans and Military Families Monument, has truly been second-to-none. This beautiful and respectful area is already visited and enjoyed by many Howard County residents. There is no doubt that your leadership was instrumental in making this wonderful park a reality.

We know that you are experiencing mixed feelings as you reach the end of your tenure as the CA President & CEO – but we hope you always fondly remember the positive difference that you made in the lives of Howard County’s military service members, Veterans, and their families. Thank you for your leadership and for your total commitment to the Howard County Commission on Veterans and Military Families. You will certainly be missed.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'James Gregory Jolissaint'.

James Gregory Jolissaint, MD  
Commission Chair  
Colonel, US Army, Retired